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(12)-3431-Worshippers before an image in the exquisitely carved Temple of Vimala Sah, Mt. Abu, India. Copyright 1901 by Underwood & Underwood.

Travels the World Underwood Stereoscopic Studies

In western Hindostan, 400 miles directly north of Bombay, Mount Abu arises abruptly from the desert. Its inaccessible cliffs are 6000 feet high, and the only practicable approaches to its summit are through steep ravines. Away up on the top of the mountain is a fertile region three miles by six in extent, and here in the eleventh and twelfth centuries the Jains built this temple of white marble. This building was taking form here in India during the days of the Romanesque and early Gothic cathedrals in Europe. The marble must have been quarried three hundred miles away and brought up the precipitous mountain roads.

The Jains of India are native non-conformists to the prevailing religion of Brahmanism, and their faith dates back five or six centuries B.C. to the times of their leader Vardhamāna, a contemporary of Buddha. They believe in the transmigration of souls but deny the sacredness of caste. They do not worship any one deity as supreme, but pay direct reverence to certain prophets who taught liberality, gentleness and repentance for sin.

This particular temple (called for its merchant builder, Vimala Sah) is dedicated to a saintly prophet called Parswanatha whose seated image is seen yonder on the elaborately carven shrine. There are fifty-five shrines or cells in this one building, all dedicated to the same saint. Repetition is a favorite ceremonial device among the Jains; this curious structure is a sort of litany in stone.

The patient devotion and wonderful skill shown in the lace-like elaboration of the sculptured ornament can hardly be over-estimated. Miniature figures of Parswanatha are used over and over as details of the decoration and are intended to remind the faithful of traditional scenes and acts in his life. They are to devout Jains what the images and pictures of Christian saints are to the faithful in the old churches of Europe.

See: —

Fergusson: *Indian and Eastern Architecture.*

Encyclopædias: Articles on *Jains* and *Mt. Abu.*

Worshippers in Temple on Mount Abu, India.

Adorateurs dans un Temple sur Mont Abu, les Inde.

Anbeter in Tempel auf dem Berg Abu, Indien.

Adoradores en el Templo sobre Monte Abu, India.

Tilbedere i templet å berget Abu, Indien.

Молящіеся во храмѣ на горѣ Абу Индія.